

## Communique Issued

Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 1600 GMT 7 Mar 74 L

[Text] At the invitation of the leadership of the Arab Ba'th Party and of the Syrian Government Gromyko, member of CPSU Central Committee Politburo and USSR minister of Foreign affairs, paid a friendly official visit to the Syrian Arab Republic from 27 February to 1 March and from 4 to 7 March.

The visit was held in an atmosphere of friendship and respect, in accordance with the friendly relations existing between the two countries.

In the course of the visit Gromyko was received by President Hafiz al-Asad of the Syrian Arab Republic. He also met Prime Minister Muhmud al-Ayyubi, the deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs, 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam, and other Syrian leaders.

In the atmosphere of friendship and mutual understanding talks were held in which questions of bilateral relations and topical international problems of interest for both countries were discussed. Special attention was given to the Near East problem.

In the course of the talks both sides expressed their satisfaction with the development of bilateral relations. They confirmed their determination to develop and strengthen the relations of friendship and cooperation existing between them, based on principles of respect for national sovereignty, noninterference in internal affairs and on the community aims in the struggle against imperialism, Zionism and colonialism.

The Soviet side reaffirmed the invariability of the Soviet Union's principled course for a thorough development and strengthening of friendship and mutually advantageous cooperation with Syria in the political, economic and cultural fields and for aid in the strengthening of its defense capacity.

During the discussion of current international problems both sides paid special attention to the latest events in the Middle East since the military operations in October last year and reaffirmed their unchanged principled attitude, stressing that the establishment of a lasting and just peace in the Near East could not be achieved without the complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from all the occupied Arab lands and without insuring the legitimate national rights of the Palestine Arab people.

The sides discussed the steps which were being taken in the interests of attaining a just and lasting peace in the Near East. They reaffirmed their unchanged position to the effect that any agreement on the disengagement of troops should be regarded as a first step along the path to the complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from all the occupied Arab lands in accordance with a timetable and as a component part of the general Near East settlement. The sides reaffirmed that any ignoring or disregard of these basic principles was fraught with the danger of a new explosion which could lead to a threat to peace and security in the Near East and throughout the world.

The sides confirmed the importance of the Soviet Union's participation in the efforts aimed at establishing in the Near East a peace based on justice at all the stages and in all the fields of the settlement.

The sides expressed their conviction that the Syrian Arab Republic must retain its legitimate and inalienable right to make use of all effective means for the liberation of its occupied territory. The sides expressed their determination to rebuff any attempts to undermine Soviet-Syrian friendship. They would not allow anyone to interfere with the further strengthening of Soviet-Syrian relations or to damage th

The Syrian sides expressed thanks for the support and aid given by the Soviet Union to the Syrian Arab Republic in all fields and stressed the importance of continuing support.

The Soviet and Syrian sides stated the usefulness of regular contacts at all levels and the exchange of opinions and consultations on questions of bilateral relations and on the most important current international problems of interest to the Soviet Union and the Syrian Arab Republic. The sides believe that the exchange of opinions on a broad range of questions which took place during the visit was an important positive step in the development of relations of friendship and close cooperation between the two countries to the good of the Soviet and Syrian peoples.

On behalf of the Soviet Government the USSR minister of foreign affairs has invited 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam, deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic, to pay an official visit to the Soviet Union. The invitation was accepted with thanks. The time of the visit will be fixed later.

#### TASS English Addition

[Editorial Report L] Moscow TASS in English 1602 GMT 7 Mar 74 transmits a report which is substantially the same as the above, identifying it as the "communique on Andrey Gromyko's visit to the Syrian Arab Republic." The TASS report leaves out some of the above, but adds the following paragraphs: "The sides reaffirmed the importance of the Soviet Union's participation in the efforts aimed at the establishment in the Middle East of peace based on justice, at all the stages and in all the fields of the settlement.

"The Soviet side expressed the opinion that solidarity among Arab nations which was displayed in the course of the October war, has made a positive contribution towards the strengthening of the positions of the Arab countries. The Soviet side also reaffirmed the significance of further strengthening of this solidarity and the necessity of putting an end to the imperialist manoeuvres aimed at splitting the unity of the Arab nations.

"As the communique notes, The sides declare their determination to give a rebuff to any attempts aimed at undermining Soviet-Syrian friendship and will not allow anybody to prevent a further strengthening of Soviet-Syrian relations or damage them."

"In discussing topical international problems, says the document, both sides reaffirmed their invariable support for the struggle of peoples against colonialism and imperialism, for elimination of colonial exploitation and racial discrimination in all forms."

"The sides reaffirmed their support for the proposal on the convocation of a special UN General Assembly session put forward by the Algerian People's Democratic Republic."